

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 460 679

IR 055 700

AUTHOR Lauber, Jeanne
TITLE Adult Returning Students and Their Library Needs.
PUB DATE 1995-07-00
NOTE 35p.; Master's Research Paper, North Carolina State University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Students; College Students; Higher Education; Interviews; *Library Services; *Needs Assessment; Questionnaires; *Reentry Students; Systems Approach; *User Needs (Information)

ABSTRACT

Interviews with 20 adult returning students investigated their library needs. Seventeen female and three male undergraduates aged 23 years and older at colleges in three cities in North Carolina participated. Many adult students have needs that differ from those of traditional undergraduates, especially in dealing with technology. The time pressures under which many adult students operate should be acknowledged by the college and its library. All library workers should have patience with returning and adult students. User training should be available for these students at times they can attend. A systemic approach to the adult returning student will yield better results than individual reactive methods. Input should be sought from the students themselves since their needs have implications for decisions about library operation, budgeting, and staffing. Appendixes include a chart of adult student statistics, a study consent form, and the interview format. (Contains 2 tables and 34 references.) SLD)

Jeanne Lauber. Adult Returning Students and Their Library Needs.
A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S.degree. July 1995. 31 pages.
Advisor: Dr. Claudia Gollop

This study employed interviews to examine adult returning students and their library needs.

Research questions included: 1. Do adult returning students have library needs which aren't being met? a. If so, what are those needs? b. Is computer training an important need for this group? 2. What services or programs might benefit this population?

Students attending colleges and universities in Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina participated in this study. The criterion for inclusion were undergraduates, age 23 and older. Anonymous interviews were conducted and audiotaped with 20 people.

Findings indicate that many adult returning students do have needs different from those of "traditional" students, particularly in the area of computer technology. Several participants suggested that librarians should have *patience* with adult returning students, especially since they often have been out of school for some time, and may not be accustomed to using the library.

Headings:

College and university libraries--Services to adults

Adult library services

Adult education--Library participation

Surveys--College and university libraries

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

J. LAUBER

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you to:

Mary Mertz, who out of the goodness of her heart, helped me edit,

The Feminist Reading and Discussion group, who was enthusiastic and encouraging,

The Bisexual Women's group for being there and having meetings,

To Dr. Claudia Gollop, who helped me immensely,

To my friends and family for their support, especially my Mom who cheered me on,

•
| Muchas Gracias!

Jeanne Lauber

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Significance of the Study and Research Questions.....	2
Literature Review.....	3
Methodology.....	9
Results.....	11
Table I: Interview Questions With Yes/No Answers.....	14
Table II: Interview Responses.....	15
Excerpts From Answers To Selected Questions.....	17
Conclusions and Suggestions.....	22
Appendix A: EDUCATION STATISTICS.....	25
Appendix B: CONSENT FORM.....	26
Appendix C: INTERVIEW FORMAT.....	27
References.....	28

Adult Returning Students and Their Library Needs

Introduction

There are increasing numbers of students at colleges and universities who didn't go directly from high school to college or didn't complete their "higher education" in consecutive years. "Adult returning students" are a larger and more important population than in the past. In fact, the number of older students has been growing much more rapidly than the number of younger students. Many people who wouldn't have gone to college in the past are beginning to attend.

Between 1980 and 1990 the enrollment of students under 25 years old increased by only 3 percent while those 25 years and over increased over 34 percent. Enrollments for people 25 years and older is projected to increase at an even faster rate by the end of the century (U.S. Dept. of Education. *Digest of Educational Statistics 1993* p.165).

Library services for these students are crucial with reference services being particularly important. Do the needs of adult students differ from those of "traditional" students? If so, how? What library services do adult returning students want and need?

- Instruction on CD-ROMs?
- OPAC's?
- Other computerized tools?
- Training in library research techniques?
- One-to-one help in using the library?
- Workshops?
- Other services yet to be articulated?

Significance of the Study

Research into this population is significant because access to information and learning for everyone is an important goal of libraries. In academic libraries it is imperative to adequately serve adult learners, who are a growing population.

This study addressed the issue of library reference services from the point of view of the adult returning students. Very little research has been done from this perspective. Research indicates that this population has been underserved or inadequately served; however, this problem has primarily been studied from the perspective of librarians, faculty, counselors, and others, but rarely from that of the adult returning students themselves.

It is important to conduct this research in order to gain insight into what is needed and wanted, and ultimately to improve library services to this population.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following major research questions:

1. a. Do adult returning students have library needs which aren't being met?
 - b. If so, what are those needs?
 - c. Is computer training an important need for this group?
2. What services or programs might benefit this population?

The hypothesis is that adult returning students require different library reference services than younger students and that these needs are not being met.

In the library field, ideas have been formulated and studied as to which services are most needed and how to best deliver them. A literature review reveals relevant

information. Most research and reflection to date, however, has focused on what *librarians* think. Very few studies have looked at what adult returning students perceive to be the problems, issues, and solutions.

This study used interviews with adult learners in order to formulate a composite of the most necessary and useful library services from their perspective. A sample population of adult learners was interviewed earlier as pilot research.

Literature Review

There are definite trends in the library and education literature on the subject of adult learners. The literature shows:

1. Adult learners do want and need library instruction and particular services.
 - a. The "information explosion" makes library education and services imperative.
 - b. Adult returning students have different characteristics and require different modes of teaching than younger students.
2. Adult returning students have special constraints and needs. These include:
 - a. Time constraints--especially considering responsibilities such as work and children.
 - b. Lack of information retrieval skills
 - c. Lack of familiarity with many new technologies and other barriers.
3. Many services and programs implemented with adult learners have been effective and successful at academic libraries but there is still need to improve approaches and services with returning adult students.

The "information explosion" isn't a new phenomena and continues with no apparent end in sight. Too much inaccessible information is a problem. Gaining access to useful information empowers people. As Wagner notes, access to information gives adult learners power over their lives. If they aren't able to gather and process information

they will become "information poor." When they use information to become more academically capable and independent people, they can pursue their goals. Malcolm X was a prime example of an influential person who was an adult learner. He used the prison library to begin his "relentless course of self-study" (Wagner p. 3).

Many who work with adult learners such as teachers, librarians, and counselors, contend that they have different characteristics and require different modes of teaching than those used with younger students. They are typically self-motivated, energetic, and goal oriented. They bring life experiences with them which serve as added resources. They want mutual respect from teachers and more often challenge ideas presented in class.

Suggestions commonly given for working with older students include:

- Make learning relevant to experiences.
- Use experiential techniques such as group discussions, exercises, peer-oriented activities.
- Stress informal and practical approaches.

In library instruction, Keenan recommends the librarian function as a facilitator, rather than an information manager. (Keenan p.153)

There is some controversy about which end of the continuum to focus on: providing only the most necessary information, and teaching students how to learn to learn, and to do research more fully. A balanced approach would include teaching how to use tools and methods of research while also focusing on students' projects at hand. If students become comfortable with the library and librarians, they can ask more questions as they continue.

Clearly "spoon feeding" is not beneficial, but students could learn in stages. With more exposure to various aspects of the library, students may be more willing and able to

master using the entire system. They can learn the basic logic (or illogic) of the library, and research strategies, while also mastering specific information sources.

Vicki Young recommends a training philosophy and outlines 10 principles of adult learning. The principles, which spell SMART PUPIL are: **S**timulus, **M**otivation, **A**pplication, **R**epetition, **T**ransfer, **P**articipation, **U**tilization, **S**et **E**x**P**ectations, **I**nterest, and **L**ogic. These were used in workshops at Xavier University in Cincinnati, through the Center for Adult and Part-time Students (CAPS).

A few detractors of adult learning theory believe age is irrelevant to teaching and learning behaviors and methods. They are in the minority and tend to be outside the field of information and library science (Keenan p. 149-150).

Adult students have time constraints particularly when they have other commitments such as jobs and children. Many adult students work full-time and attend school part-time. Approximately 73% of the part-time students who attend institutions of higher education in the U.S. are over 22 years old (*Digest of Education Statistics* p.177). This makes it very important to provide services at convenient hours and locations.

Time pressures under which adult students must often perform, should be acknowledged by the college and its library. It is encouraging to know that teaching time management is sometimes even part of the curriculum in courses for adult learners.

Other services academic libraries are providing to accommodate students with limited time include:

- evening and week-end library hours
- Saturday library use classes
- phone reference services
- e-mail reference
- ILL to off-campus locations (document delivery)
- teleconferencing
- classes at work-sites
- college credit for library courses.

Community colleges are integrating multi-media resources in their Learning Resource Centers (LRCs.) They are especially responsive to adult students because of the

community college philosophy of meeting the needs of the local community, the diverse enrollments, and emphasis on teaching rather than research (Holleman p. 145).

Many adult students lack information retrieval skills, particularly with the advent of new technologies such as OPACs, CD-ROMs, and on-line searching systems. This along with the *amount* of information available can lead to what some term "library anxiety." The literature documents that this is an extensive problem and that libraries are beginning to address it.

A study on how students felt about using the library for research showed some revealing comments from reentry students. One student expressed: "Using the library is a scary prospect, especially when I think about in-depth research. I know that research cannot be done without frequent visits to the library and I know that nothing in here will hurt me, but it all seems so vast and overpowering." Another said: "When I first entered the library, I was terrified. I didn't know where anything was located or even who to ask to get some help. It was like being in a foreign country and unable to speak the language." (Mellon p. 78)

Tamaiuola, in an article on bibliographic instruction for adult reentry students, notes: "The library however, is one place on campus about which reentry students remain apprehensive. Older students are perplexed--even vexed--by the library's abundant resources" (Tamaiuola p. 49).

In an excellent study of adult learners and library instruction, problems were identified with academic librarians. While adult returning students believe librarians are knowledgeable, they are often dissatisfied or uncomfortable with the way knowledge is passed on. Eleanor Mary Carter found that many adult learners reported that librarians appeared to be superior, snobbish, or unwilling to help. A large percentage of adult students asked family, peers, student workers, or other "non-professionals" for help first, rather than approach a librarian. Many stated that librarians made them feel inferior or guilty because they weren't informed library users.

Returning students also may feel insecure about doing well academically after being out of school for some time. They may feel they've forgotten some things and with so many changes in technology in the library they may also feel behind the times and intimidated.

There is some indication that this apprehension, especially with technology, may be changing. There is variation according to library setting and population. Some adult returning students have more technological education and training when they return to college than others. Some colleges and universities offer more education and training on technology either integrated into the curriculum or through library services. This may affect the level of apprehension about technology.

A study done at Arizona State University West, challenged some assumptions about computer anxiety. A survey was taken of "non-traditional" and traditional students. There was a strong approval and enthusiasm for electronic resources among both groups. Questions were ranked 1 to 5 with 1 being "least" and 5 being "most." On the question: "Using computers instead of paper indexes or a card catalog saves me time." was ranked high by both groups, with an overall mean score of 4.08. The question: "It is important to me for the library to have classes in how to use electronic sources." had no "significant interaction" between non-traditional and traditional students, and received a low overall mean score of 2.84.

Some possible explanations offered were that perhaps students prefer to get help at the Reference Desk at the time they need it, rather than to take a class, and/or that computers are becoming so familiar in many aspects of life that the level of anxiety may be less now than in the past. An example is A.T.M. machines which have become so commonplace.

Another finding of this study was that the library as "a quiet place to study" is still seen as an important role of the library. Contrary to what one might expect, adult students do not necessarily prefer to study at home. (Noisy children may be part of the

reason, along with other distractions at home.) Question #16 was: "A quiet place in the library to study is important to me." The overall mean score was 4.02 with full-time students having a slightly higher score (4.25) than part-time students (3.79). The Arizona State University West library took these results seriously by establishing quiet study areas and enforcing them.

In evaluating successful library programs and services designed for adult returning students, several points continue to resurface. Faculty involvement and administrative support are important. As Susan Swords Steffen points out, support and coordination from such people as the Dean, faculty members, and college administrators are crucial to successful programs (Steffen, 1992).

Outreach services to students are much more effective and efficient when the parent institution is supportive. A good example of outreach is a program implemented through Central Michigan University where the United Auto Workers/Ford National Development and Training Center works with the university on programs for the workers. The College and University Options Program serves auto workers in several ways. Some orientations are done on-site and librarians try to keep up with program development. University instructors go to plants to teach courses, librarians offer phone reference, and there's a Central Michigan University Off-Campus Library Program.

According to Trullinger, the impact of tuition assistance programs through auto companies and other employers require that colleges and universities be responsive to workers needs. (Trullinger, p.315-323)

The literature on adult returning students indicates that this group does have library needs that are different than those of "traditional" students. Libraries, particularly academic libraries, are beginning to respond to the needs of adult returning students, but more information on what the students want can help improve services.

Methodology

A sample of 20 adult returning students was obtained from: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University, and Alamance Community College. Volunteers were recruited through flyers posted on two campuses (UNC/CH and NC Central U.), word-of-mouth, and through walk-ins from The Student Aid Resource Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The operational definition of "adult returning students" for this study is undergraduates, aged 23 years and older. No attempt was made to have a proportionate sample by ethnicity, however, African American, European American, and Latino people were included. More women than men were interviewed which reflects the population of adult returning students. See Appendix A from *Digest of Education Statistics*.

No attempt was made to obtain a random sample due to time constraints and the nature of the research. Most of the interviews resembled "brainstorming" sessions which provided the researcher with ideas and suggestions. The quality and depth of answers were more important than the quantity of interviewees.

Interviews were the preferable mode of data collection since surveys do not lend themselves to the candor and depth of personal interviews. More in-depth information could be gained; beliefs, emotions and attitudes that may not be revealed in writing could be observed; non-verbal communication added information; and questions could be explained, clarified, and adapted in a more flexible way.

Consistency in the questions asked helped obtain comparable results on questions, however there is also room to adapt questions based on interviewees' responses and experiences. If the answer to a question was answered by a previous question, it could

be skipped. Also, if a question isn't relevant for the present tense, it could be put in the past tense, for example: "Would you like instruction on the OPAC?" or else: "Would you have liked instruction on the OPAC when you first used it?".

Interviews were conducted using a written set of 13 questions, plus subsets. (See Interview Format in Appendix B). An additional open-ended question was added during data collection in order to garner insight into the library needs of adult returning students. That question was: "Anything else you'd like to add? Anything you think libraries or librarians should be aware of when serving adult returning students?" These interviews were prearranged and confidentiality was insured, as no names were associated with results. Audio tapes were used to supplement notes during the data collection phase.

All participants signed a written consent form. (See Consent Form in Appendix). They also kept one copy of the Consent Form for themselves in case they had further questions or concerns after the interview.

While this study was conducted on a small scale, it did reveal some of the basic library needs of this group. Further research with a larger, more diverse sample, which more closely represents the population of adult returning students, could be conducted to possibly validate this study and to reveal other aspects relative to the library needs of this population.

Results

Twenty participants were interviewed; 17 were female and 3 were male.

Individual interview questions addressed one or more particular research questions.

- Research Question #1.** *a.*: Do adult returning students have library reference needs which are not being met?
Interview questions: 4, 8
b.: If so, what are those needs?
Interview questions: 6, 8
c.: Is training on computers an important need for this group?
Interview questions: 9, 10, 11, 11a.

- Research Question #2:** What services or programs might benefit this population?
Interview questions: 12, 13a, b, c, d

Questions with yes/no answers are expressed statistically. All other questions were

open-ended to which no statistical value applied.

This study revealed: Yes, adult returning students do have unmet needs, especially in the area of training on computers. All but a few people interviewed had a need now or in the recent past for computer training. Question 8 showed that 90% (18 people) would like instruction on computerized systems such as those used to research newspapers, magazines, and journals.

Students shared some specific circumstances of their computer experiences. One student with more computer experience had gained some knowledge through in-class exercises completed at the library, and had gained some experience through work. This student's psychology class received some training in Davis library, the main academic library on campus. One student who had been intimidated in the past, received help from

minimal experience, has a friend who's "good with computers" who helps her with computers in the library. Some students learned a lot on the job and were quite comfortable and experienced with computers. It could be said that some of their library reference needs are being met, but often by people apart from the library staff.

Many of students admitted that at first they were embarrassed to ask for help in the library. Some said it was intimidating to ask for help initially, but most interviewees said that when they asked for help in the library, they did get help. This is in accordance with the literature that discussed anxiety in the library. Some students also said that they felt dumb or childlike when they needed to ask for help.

Research Question #2 addressed services and programs that would benefit this group. A couple of suggestions were indicated in the interviews: One-to-one assistance, a workshop or course on using the library, especially if it were offered for credit. Also, library workers who walk among computer stations to assist library users was suggested.

Of those adult returning students interviewed, most (85%) said they would like, or had received one-to-one assistance in using the library to complete school assignments. This is a rather vague description and could include consulting, help at the reference desk, help from a friend, several other types of assistance.

Libraries lack the resources to provide extensive one-to-one assistance. Personal attention does however, seem very valuable to this population. Since some adult returning students are embarrassed to ask for assistance, it's especially important for reference librarians to look available while at the reference desk, which is important with any population.

The idea of "floaters" or people strolling through the area to assist library users came up during an interview. Some public libraries have experimented with this and academic library workers sometimes do it informally. In many academic libraries, in areas where CD-ROMs are located, students often ask questions of library workers walking by or helping someone else. Another prime location where users might benefit

from "floaters" is near OPACs (on-line public access catalogs) especially when new systems have been installed. Library users and particularly adult returning students are sometimes embarrassed to ask for help and may be less likely to go up to a reference or help desk than to motion or speak to a library worker passing by. At Davis Library at University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill, and at Shepard Library at North Carolina Central University, students often ask for help from library workers and librarians passing by or fixing printer problems, near the CD-ROM databases.

In "Islands in a Sea of Change," James Rettig writes about Floating Reference Librarians. Reference librarians get out from behind the desk and spend some time wandering among users, especially near OPACs and CD-ROM systems. Boston College has had some success with this mode of service. (Rettig 1993 p.79-80).

Interviews indicated that most adult returning students are interested in a workshop or course on using the library, particularly if it were brief, or if it were for college credit. Interview Question #14 addressed this issue. Some would like a course or workshop if offered for credit, but others didn't want to commit that much time.

Seventeen students (85%) interviewed said they would take a course if it was offered for credit and 14 (70%) said they'd take it for no credit. Some stipulated that it would have to be short in length. Fourteen respondents (70%) were interested in a possible Saturday time slot. Others preferred evenings on the week days. A bigger sample would give a better sense of which workshop schedules would be best attended. Some community colleges and four year colleges are beginning to offer college credit for library education and some colleges include library skills training as part of a course such as first year English classes. Individual institutions should assess their own students' needs and plan courses or training accordingly.

Table I

Interview Questions With Yes/No Answers

Questions with Yes/No answers	% Yes	#Yes	#No
1. Have you been in a library in the last 6 months?	100%	20	0
5. Did someone working there (library) help you?	75%	15	5
9. Have you used a computerized or online library catalog?	85%	17	3
11. Would you like (or would you have liked) instruction on a computerized library catalog?	80%	16	4
11.a. other computerized systems such as those used to research newspapers, magazines, journals?	90%	18	2
12. Would you like one-to-one assistance in using the library to complete school assignments?	85%	17	3
13. Would you be interested in taking a course or workshop on using the library?	X	X	X
a. For credit?	85%	17	3
b. How about for no credit?	70%	14	6
c. If the course were offered on a Saturday would you attend?	70%	14	6

Table II

Interview Responses

Interview Questions	Summary of Most Frequent Responses
1. Have you been in a library in the last 6 months? ___yes ___no	all said yes
a. Why did you go?	research:for school, self, work. to study. borrow materials: books, videos, CDs. use reserve collection. to photocopy.
b. (If no) When were you last in the library?	not applicable
2. (If yes) How often do you go to a library?	(most students went) every week or more often.
3. (If not covered in 1st question) What kind of library was it? ___public ___college ___other	academic (some went to public also. some to both.)
4. Did you notice anything difficult in using that library?	computer questions. trying to locate materials that were hard to find or missing.
5. Did someone working there help you? ___yes ___no	most said yes. reserve reading, circulation, & reference staff. some didn't ask for help.
6. What helped you in using that library? Examples: signs, handouts, way things were organized?	signs: in elevators with call numbers, hanging from ceiling, etc. library tour. instructions on screen OPAC.
7. What other experiences have you had in libraries? What have been the best and worst things you've experienced?	bad: fees or fines. afraid to ask for help & look or feel stupid. people working in library who don't know what's in library themselves. spend a lot of time on computer to get articles and then they're missing. good: study quietly.borrow books, videos, books on tape.finding more than you need.
8. Do you have library needs as an adult learner that you think "traditional" college students don't have?	computer training. books for fun. may use the library to research how an assignment is to be done since there are some new ways & have forgotten a lot. research on careers & jobs for after graduation. (some people interviewed said "No.")
9. Have you used a computerized or online	most said yes

9. Have you used a computerized or online library catalog? <u> </u> yes <u> </u> no	most said yes
10. What computer experience do you have?	most said: wordprocessing & OPAC some said: spreadsheets(Excel, Lotus),database management, online searching, Internet a few said: none
11. Would you like (or would you have liked) instruction on a computerized library catalog? <u> </u> yes <u> </u> no	most said yes
11.a. Would you like (or would you have liked)instruction on other computerized systems such as those used to research newspapers, magazines, journals? <u> </u> yes <u> </u> no	almost all said yes
12. Would you like one-to-one assistance in using the library to complete school assignments? <u> </u> yes <u> </u> no	most said yes
13. Would you be interested in taking a course or workshop on using the library?	
a. For credit? <u> </u> yes <u> </u> no	most said yes
b. How about for no credit? <u> </u> yes <u> </u> no	most said yes
c. If the course were offered on a Saturday would you attend? <u> </u> yes <u> </u> no	most said yes
d. What other times would be good for you?	(in order of most frequent responses) at night or evening. late afternoons. weekdays during the day. Sundays.

Excerpts from answers to selected questions:

1.a. Why did you go?

- to study #
- to get information, do research
 - medical information.
 - for school: for a paper, look up an article for a paper, for research etc.
 - for self
 - for work
- to borrow books-(several)
- to use reserve collection
- to borrow videos and CDs
- to photocopy
- to watch videos for a class

1.b.

2. How often do you go to a library?

Most students (80%) went every week or more often.

3. What kind of library was it?

- public
- academic
 - including undergraduate, graduate, medical, health sciences

4. Did you notice anything difficult about using the library?

- computers
 - catalog system (OPAC-online public access catalog)
 - "not from computer age and embarrassed to ask"
 - computer system
 - "computer illiterate"
 - computer for magazines (too many hits)
- other:
 - books missing from stacks that should be there.

- locating books in a section.
- not really. pretty user friendly.
- resources are superior to those I used in England.
- not enough copy machines.
- bad lighting.

5. Did someone working there help you? Comments:

- "...my wife puts her hands on exactly what I want"
- "When I ask."
- "Yes, on the computer."
- "...never ask"
- "the reserve reading person."
- at circulation desk and help desk (reference)
- for I.L.L.(InterLibrary Loan)
- "Yes, when I panicked."
- "...need more time with CD-ROM
- "They gave me a stapler and white-out."
- help finding things.
- good reference help in undergrad. library.
- resource people were helpful.

6. Did anything help you in using that library? for example signs, handouts, the way things were organized?

- signs:
 - floor layout maps (several).
 - signs in elevators with call numbers (several said this)
 - other signs with call numbers
 - signs hanging from ceilings
 - could use more signs to the copy machines
 - signs showing fiction, non-fiction etc.
 - signs at end of rows
 - sign for notebooks for reserve materials
 - directory showing where things are.
- staff:
 - asked where to find certain text books and someone helped her
 - people at help desk
 - t public library people were more helpful.
- Other:
 - call numbers
 - I.L.L. (Interlibrary Loan)
 - library tour for class

- instructions on the screen (of OPAC-online public access catalog)
- knowledge of study areas and private desks vs. group study areas

7. What other experiences have you had in libraries? what were the best and worst things you've experienced?

• worst:

- "...hard for out age bracket...assume we know how to look things up."
- had to go to 5 libraries on campus to get articles for a research paper
- copy machine problems
- living far from public library
- afraid to ask for help and look stupid
- fees, fines (several)
- a search on CD-ROM. There were instructions but nothing happened and it made me feel stupid.
- spend a lot of time on computer to get articles and then they're missing.
- ending up with a million references (CD-ROM), time consuming
- information spread from floor to floor to floor
- non-print experience with looking at videos--staff wasn't helpful.
- call numbers skip and it's hard to find my way around the library.
- trouble finding a journal

• best:

- study quietly.(several) "...do better on tests if I study at the library first."
- videos
- music CDs
- books on tape
- borrow books
- finding everything. "Finding what I want."
- "finding it after using the catalog."
- using old journals
- knowing I won't run out of books
- Lexis/Nexis
- online services-including OPAC, computer lab, etc.
- borrowing videos and music Cds
- late hours
- book drop
- can view and print articles (from magazines and journals) its all there.
- can tell if a book's at another library on campus or at other campuses
- microfiche

8. Do you have library needs as an adult returning student that you think "traditional" college students don't have?

- computers-(technology, etc.)many students said this
- books for fun (several said this) more stuff for personal interest-nutrition, fitness etc.
- No.
- tour of library (a couple people said this)
- hours: maybe late hours because I work days. long hours.
- more difficult to find books after being out of school for 13 years
- want somewhere quiet to study.(several)
- use more resources for broad research. more life experiences.

9.Have you used a computerized or online library catalog?

most (85%) said yes

10. What computer experience do you have (in general)?

- at work
- at home
- MAC
- PC
- U.Search (CD-ROM products)
- Infotrack
- Wordprocessing (Wordperfect, Word)
- spreadsheets-Lotus, Excel
- databases
- desktop publishing
- OPAC (online public access catalog)
search Triangle catalog (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill)
- windows
- modem at home
- "lots"
- "none."
- online searching
- Internet including HTML.
- programming
- Westlaw, Lexis/Nexis

***Anything else you'd like to add? Anything you think libraries or librarians should be aware of when serving adult returning students?**

- "Be patient."
- responses related to technology:
 - people coming back may have forgotten about resources and online may be unfamiliar.
 - menus could be "beefed up."
 - people may be out of touch with what it's like; libraries have changed.
 - older students might need more consideration with online systems.
 - need CD-ROM instruction.
 - libraries are a resource for education and for access to technology, even including a change to learn wordprocessing.
 - "I think there are probably a lot of us like that. It's like you're embarrassed because you see the younger kids know how to do it, and you don't know how to do it. It's embarrassing -when you've raised children who know how to use computers and you don't."
- responses related to not wanting to ask for help, fear of looking "stupid"
 - ...shy in asking questions. let people find out on their own because they're afraid to feel stupid.
 - ...be aware that they *are* adults and know that they've tried themselves first before asking for help.
 - people are intimidated if no one to ask, when so much is computers.
 - "...don't want to ask for help."
 - one-to-one help is best.
- other responses:
 - ...may have less experience if not doing it (using library) on a regular basis.
 - more people wandering around to help, or maybe sign "if you need assistance".
 - Health Sciences library had announcements over the P.A. that a workshop will start at x - o'clock (like in museums).
 - missed library tour/orientation given in English class because: missed class that night, - already had English previously. would also like to go to graduate library in addition to undergraduate.
 - "I'm pretty satisfied."
 - "...when your hair is white..." people treat you different.
 - don't think people treated me any differently because I'm older. (didn't experience age discrimination)
 - ...they *want* to be in school and have made that choice.

*The additional question added after completion of original interview format.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Librarians and all library workers should have patience with adult returning students while being sensitive to their need "not to feel stupid". Library workers should be available but not condescending nor overbearing.

To ensure "information literacy" colleges that set up library training as part of a course (which first year students take) should consider, that some students may transfer in from other schools, or test out of courses, or have courses waived, which would mean they would miss the library component also. This could be addressed by requiring or offering alternatives, such as short library trainings or through another course. Perhaps general library literacy could be assessed as part of the requirements for graduation. This should not be a punitive measure, but rather a free service to ensure some common competencies and skills before graduating.

A systemic approach to offering library services to adult returning students is suggested, rather than individual reactive methods. However, plans can be modified and refined over time as necessary to fulfill the needs of the academic communities. As it becomes apparent which are the best approaches, techniques, and services, the programs that work best can be formalized. Even then, changes can be made following periodic evaluations. Changes in populations, technology, and library resources make it especially important to evaluate and reevaluate library services in the realm of returning students.

The goals and mission of academic libraries include being accessible and responsive to those they serve. The quantity of people served and the quality of service should be addressed.

Future research should include a larger, more diverse sample of adult returning students. Questionnaires or interviews on reference services could reveal information on

service delivery. Specific questions on "floaters," workshops, and other services are recommended.

Who better to provide input with respect to service and program development than those needing service? Information from this type of research has implications for decision making about library operations, budgeting, and staffing. The academic library stands to gain much in the campus community and the wider community by examining and improving services to adult returning students.

APPENDIXES

EDUCATION STATISTICS

Table 172.—Total fall enrollment in institutions of higher education, by level, sex, age, and attendance status of student: 1991

Attendance status and age of student	All levels			Undergraduate			First-professional			Graduate		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
All students	14,358,953	6,501,844	7,857,109	12,439,287	5,571,003	6,868,284	280,531	169,875	110,656	1,639,135	760,966	878,169
Under 18	213,684	87,145	126,539	213,097	88,888	124,209	51	37	14	538	220	318
18 and 19	2,593,623	1,175,496	1,418,127	2,592,594	1,175,068	1,417,526	338	142	196	891	286	405
20 and 21	2,752,642	1,298,156	1,454,486	2,729,707	1,287,028	1,442,679	8,092	4,080	4,012	14,843	7,048	7,795
22 to 24	2,150,871	1,095,190	1,055,681	1,820,695	930,872	889,823	97,499	57,277	40,222	232,677	107,041	125,636
25 to 29	1,897,644	910,849	986,795	1,355,909	615,336	740,573	91,607	58,668	32,939	450,128	236,845	213,283
30 to 34	1,270,208	538,698	731,510	960,503	371,317	589,186	30,409	19,311	11,098	279,296	148,070	131,226
35 to 39	965,541	356,601	608,940	736,886	252,476	484,410	15,899	9,238	6,661	212,756	94,887	117,869
40 to 49	1,053,932	337,673	716,259	773,473	236,796	536,677	12,165	6,373	5,792	268,294	94,504	173,790
50 to 64	281,986	91,315	190,671	215,507	68,904	146,603	2,335	1,202	1,133	64,144	21,209	42,935
65 and over	63,566	24,543	39,023	58,343	22,148	36,195	172	102	70	5,051	2,293	2,758
Age unknown	1,115,256	586,178	529,078	982,573	524,170	458,403	21,964	13,445	8,519	110,719	48,563	62,156
Full-time	8,115,329	3,929,375	4,185,954	7,221,412	3,415,526	3,785,886	252,012	152,356	99,656	641,905	341,493	300,412
Under 18	114,591	47,016	67,575	114,435	46,921	67,514	43	32	11	113	43	50
18 and 19	2,256,045	1,032,557	1,223,488	2,255,405	1,032,264	1,223,141	328	140	188	312	153	159
20 and 21	2,215,877	1,064,488	1,151,389	2,196,395	1,054,778	1,141,617	7,996	4,038	3,958	11,486	5,672	5,814
22 to 24	1,376,269	753,084	623,185	1,129,520	623,063	506,457	94,910	55,708	39,202	151,839	74,313	77,526
25 to 29	799,421	433,186	366,235	510,589	259,596	250,993	83,395	53,505	29,890	205,437	120,085	85,352
30 to 34	395,588	182,117	213,471	273,210	108,334	164,876	24,589	15,465	9,124	97,789	58,318	39,471
35 to 39	254,555	100,816	153,739	183,140	63,429	119,711	11,847	6,818	5,029	59,568	30,569	28,999
40 to 49	227,918	83,407	144,511	160,276	54,915	105,361	8,355	4,335	4,020	59,287	24,157	35,130
50 to 64	43,821	15,987	27,834	30,219	10,625	19,594	1,494	772	722	12,108	4,590	7,518
65 and over	5,500	2,685	2,815	4,702	2,266	2,436	92	55	37	706	364	342
Age unknown	425,744	214,032	211,712	363,521	179,335	184,186	18,963	11,488	7,475	43,260	23,207	20,051
Part-time	6,243,624	2,572,469	3,671,155	5,217,875	2,135,477	3,082,398	28,519	17,519	11,000	997,230	419,473	577,757
Under 18	99,093	40,129	58,964	98,662	39,967	58,695	8	5	3	423	157	266
18 and 19	337,578	142,939	194,639	337,189	142,804	194,385	10	2	9	379	133	246
20 and 21	536,765	233,668	303,097	533,312	232,250	301,062	96	42	54	3,357	1,376	1,981
22 to 24	774,602	342,106	432,496	691,175	307,809	383,366	2,589	1,569	1,020	40,838	32,728	48,110
25 to 29	1,098,223	477,663	620,560	845,320	355,740	489,580	8,212	5,163	3,049	244,691	116,760	127,931
30 to 34	874,620	356,581	518,039	687,293	282,983	404,310	5,820	3,846	1,974	181,507	89,752	91,755
35 to 39	710,946	255,785	455,201	553,746	189,047	364,699	4,052	2,420	1,632	153,188	64,318	88,870
40 to 49	426,014	154,266	271,748	413,197	181,881	231,316	3,810	2,038	1,772	209,007	70,347	138,660
50 to 64	238,165	75,328	162,837	185,288	58,279	127,009	841	430	411	52,036	16,619	35,417
65 and over	58,066	21,858	36,208	53,641	19,882	33,759	80	47	33	4,345	1,929	2,416
Age unknown	689,512	372,146	317,366	619,052	344,835	274,217	3,001	1,957	1,044	67,459	25,354	42,105

United States Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics 1993. Washington, DC, 1993. 179.

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in a study of individuals who are now, or plan to become, adult returning college or university students. The research is designed to learn about library needs and desires, especially reference services including library instruction. This study is being conducted by Jeanne Lauber for a Master's paper in the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill.

I may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

Audio tapes will be used but confidentiality and anonymity are ensured and names won't be published in any documents.

If I have any questions or concerns, I can contact Jeanne Lauber at:

Jeanne Lauber
(919)932-1264
118B Ashley Forest Dr.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
LAUBJ.ILS@MHS.UNC.EDU

or the faculty advisor Dr. Gollop at:

(919)962-8362
Manning Hall CB# 3360
or gollop@ILS.UNC.EDU

If I have any concerns or questions about my rights as a research subject I can contact:

Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board
Frances A. Campbell, Chair
CB# 4100, 300 Bynum Hall
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-4100
(919)966-5625

(DATE)

(Signature of Participant)

Appendix C

INTERVIEW FORMAT

Introduction to interviewee:

There are more and more adult returning students at colleges and universities. These "adult returning students" are a larger and more important group than in the past. I'm interested in learning about what adult returning students, and those who plan to become returning adult students, need or want from college and university libraries. I'd like to ask you some questions on library services and get suggestions for what you, as an adult learner, recommend to librarians and libraries.

(Answers to earlier questions dictated the language of later questions, and which later questions were asked.)

Interview questions:

1. Have you been in a library in the last 6 months? ☐ yes ☐ no
 - a. Why did you go?
 - b. (If no) When were you last in a library?
2. If yes, How often do you go to a library?
3. (If not covered in 1st question) What kind of library was it?
☐ public ☐ college ☐ other
4. Did you notice anything difficult about using that library?
5. Did someone working there help you? ☐ yes ☐ no (comments)
6. What helped you in using that library? Examples: signs, handouts, way things were organized?
7. What other experiences have you had in libraries? a.) What have been the best and worst things you've experienced?
8. Do you have library needs as an adult learner that you think "traditional" college students don't have?
9. Have you used a computerized or online library catalog? ☐ yes ☐ no
10. What computer experience do you have?
11. Would you like (or would you have liked) instruction on a computerized library catalog? ☐ yes ☐ no
 - a. Other computerized systems such as those used to research newspapers, magazines, journals? ☐ yes ☐ no
12. Would you like one-to-one assistance in using the library to complete school assignments? ☐ yes ☐ no (comments)
13. Would you be interested in taking a course or workshop on using the library? ☐ yes ☐ no
 - a. For credit? ☐ yes ☐ no
 - b. How about for no credit? ☐ yes ☐ no
 - c. If the course were offered on a Saturday would you attend? ☐ yes ☐ no
 - d. What other times would be good for you?

References

- Anderson, Kari. "Basic Library Skills for BLS Students." *Reaching and Teaching Diverse Library User Groups*. Papers Presented at the Sixteenth National LOEX Library Instruction Conference held at Bowling Green State University. 5 & 6 May 1988. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1989, 100.
- Association of College and Research Libraries. "Task Force to Review the Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services. Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services." *College and Research Libraries News* 51 (1990): 353-355.
- Blumenthal, Caroline and Pauline Manaka. "Bibliographic Instruction for Returning Students." *Reaching and Teaching Diverse Library User Groups*. Papers Presented at the Sixteenth National LOEX Library Instruction Conference held at Bowling Green State University. 5 & 6 May 1988. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1989, 102.
- Carr, David. "The Meaning of the Adult Independent Library Learning Project." *Library Trends* 35 (Fall 1986): 326-345.
- Carr, David. "The Situation of the Adult Learner in the Library." *Reaching and Teaching Diverse Library User Groups*. Papers Presented at the Sixteenth National LOEX Library Instruction Conference held at Bowling Green State University. 5 & 6 May 1988. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1989, 35-43.
- Carter, Eleanor M. "Adult Learner Perceptions of Library Instructional Services in Public Two Year Colleges." Diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1986. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1987.
- Coughlan, Jacquelyn. "The BI Librarian's New Constituency: Adult Independent Learners." *Integrating Library Use Skills into the General Education Curriculum*. The Reference Librarian Number 24. Ed. Maureen Pastine and Bill Katz. New York: The Haworth Press, 1989. 159-173.
- Fitzgibbons, Kathryn Val. "Adults' Self-Directed Learner Characteristics and Library Literacy." *DAI* 51 (1990): 12A. University of Maryland.
- Garcha, Rajinder and Jeffrey N. Gatten. "Preliminary Observations of Non-traditional University Students' Library Skills." *Library Review*. 39 #1 (1990): 13-20.

- Hammond, Carol. "Nontraditional Students and the Library: Opinions, Preferences, and Behaviors." *College and Research Libraries* 55 (July 1994): 323-41.
- Haworth, E. "Library Services to the Off-campus and independent learner: a review of the literature." *Journal of Librarianship* 14 (July 1982): 157-175.
- Hines, Betsy, et al. "Bibliographic Instruction for the Adult Student in an Academic Library." *Continuing Higher Education* (Spring 1989): 20-24.
- Holleman, Margaret and Annette Peretz. "Identity of Community College LRCs: Divergent or Convergent?" *Community College Libraries: Centers for Lifelong Learning* Ed. Rosanne Kalick. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992. 145-155.
- Huston, Mary M. "May I Introduce You: Teaching Culturally Diverse End-Users Through Everyday Information Seeking Experiences." *RSR* (Spring 1989): 7-11.
- Keenan, Lori M. "Andragogy Off-Campus: The Library's Role." *Integrating Library Use Skills into the General Education Curriculum*. The Reference Librarian Number 24. Ed. Maureen Pastine and Bill Katz. New York: The Haworth Press, 1989. 147-159.
- Kennedy, Mary Ellen. "Bibliographic Instruction in the Academic Library: Looking at the Adult Student." *Reference Librarian* 10 (Spring/Summer 1984): 205-213.
- Lessin, Barton M. comp. and ed. *Off-campus Library Services: Selected Readings from Central Michigan University's Off-campus Library Services Conferences*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1991.
- Mellon, Constance. "Library Anxiety and the Non-Traditional Student." *Reaching and Teaching Diverse Library User Groups*. Papers Presented at the Sixteenth National LOEX Library Instruction Conference held at Bowling Green State University. 5 & 6 May 1988. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1989. 77-81.
- Rettig, James. "Islands in a Sea of Change." In *Rethinking Reference in Academic Libraries*. Lipow, Anne G., ed. Berkeley, CA: Library Solutions Press, 1993: 79-80.
- Sheridan, Jean. "Andragogy: A New Concept for Academic Librarians." *Research Strategies* 4 (Fall 1986): 156-167.
- Slotnick, Henry B., et al., *Adult Learners on Campus*. Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1993.
- Steffen, Susan Swords. "Designing Bibliographic Instruction Programs for Adult Students: The Schaffner Library Experience." *Illinois Libraries* 70 (December 1988): 644-649.

Steffen, Susan Swords and Gary S. Ruther. "Library Services for Adult Students: What Difference Do They Make?" *Exploring Our Horizons*. 12th National Conference On Alternative and External Degree Programs for Adults. Evanston, Illinois, October 8-10, 1992. Washington D.C.: Alliance, an Association for Alternative Degree Programs; American Council on Education, 1992. 196-206.

Steffen, Susan Swords. "Partnership for Quality: Non-Traditional Students and the Librarian." *The Librarian in the University: Essays on Membership in the Academic Community*. Eds. H. Palmer Hall and Caroline Byrd. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990. 39-49.

Steffen, Susan Swords. "Removing Barriers: Bibliographic Instruction for Adults." *Reaching and Teaching Diverse Library User Groups*. Papers Presented at the Sixteenth National LOEX Library Instruction Conference held at Bowling Green State University. 5 & 6 May 1988. Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1989. 97-98.

Tomaiuolo, Nicholas G. "Reconsidering Bibliographic Instruction for Adult Reentry Students: Emphasizing the Practical." *Reference Services Review* 18.1 (Spring 1990): 49-54.

Toomer, Clarence. "Adult Learner Perceptions of Bibliographic Instructional Services in Five Private Four-Year Liberal Arts Colleges in North Carolina." *DAI* 54 (1993) 02A. North Carolina State University at Raleigh.

Trullinger, Robert. "Non-traditional Education, an Industrial phenomenon, and Libraries." *The Off-Campus Library Services Conference Proceedings*. Held at Reno, Nevada 1986. Ed. Barton M. Lessin. Mount Pleasant, Michigan: Central Michigan University Press, 1987. 315-323.

United States. Department of Commerce. Economics and Statistics Administration. Bureau of the Census. *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1993*. 113th ed. Washington, DC 1993.

United States Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education Statistics 1993*. Washington, DC, 1993.

Vakili, Mary Jane. "Revamping a Required BI Course for Adult Students." *Research Strategies*. 11.1 (Winter 1993): 24-32.

Wagner, Colette A. and Augusta S. Kappner. "The Academic Library and the Nontraditional Student," *Libraries and the Search for Academic Excellence*. Ed. Patricia Senn Breivik and Robert Wedgeworth. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1988. 43-66.

Wyman, Andrea. "Working with Nontraditional Students in the Academic Library." *The Journal of American Librarianship*. 14.1 (March 1988): 23-33.

Young, Vicki. "Applying the Principles of Adult Learning to the Design of a Two Hour Workshop for Adult and Part-time Students." *What is Good Instruction Now?* 20th LOEX conference, Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1993. 117-120.